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The guidelines for the sources, recruitment, training, and type of staff needed for child development centers suggest four ways of securing the needed staff: paid professionals; professional and nonprofessional volunteers, neighborhood residents, especially parents of participating children; and professional workers borrowed from staffs of private and public community agencies. There should be a teacher in charge of each group of 15 children; she should be a graduate of a four-year college program with a major in nursery education, nursery-kindergarten education, or early childhood education. Recruitment efforts suggested include using every source that can provide names of people with the desired qualifications, and using the news media to publicize job opportunities. One way a community can improve the quality of its staff is to make sure that all teachers who need it get help, supervision, and training on the job. Every class should have at least one assistant teacher in addition to the teacher; two assistants are needed in a full-day program.

The teacher's role extends beyond that of the normal kindergarten; she works with the family as well as the child and uses techniques usually associated with social work, health, parent education, and nutrition. Although the teacher takes the initial steps in these areas, professional help is provided to follow through.

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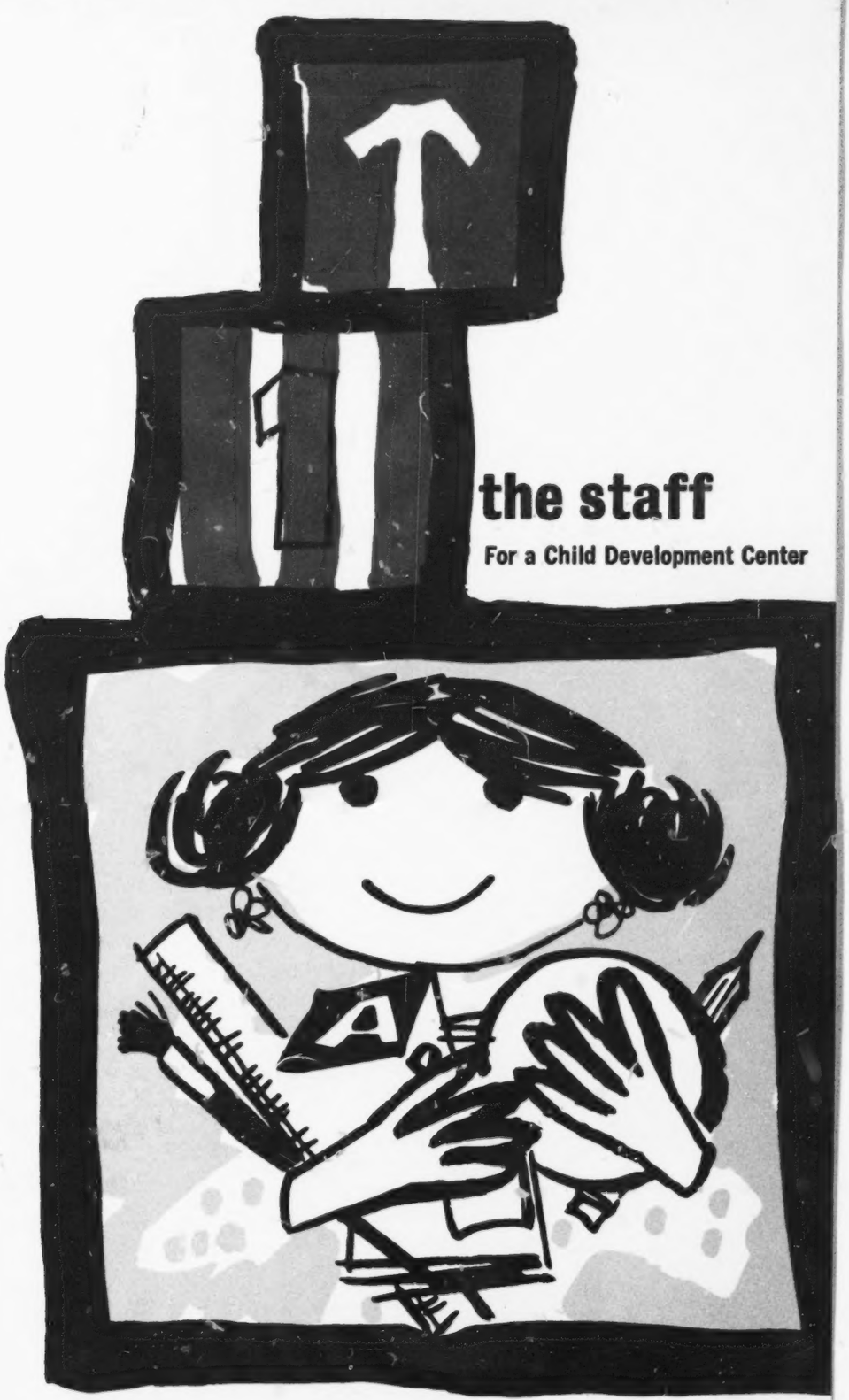

the staff

For a Child Development Center

Office of Economic Opportunity, Washington, D.C.

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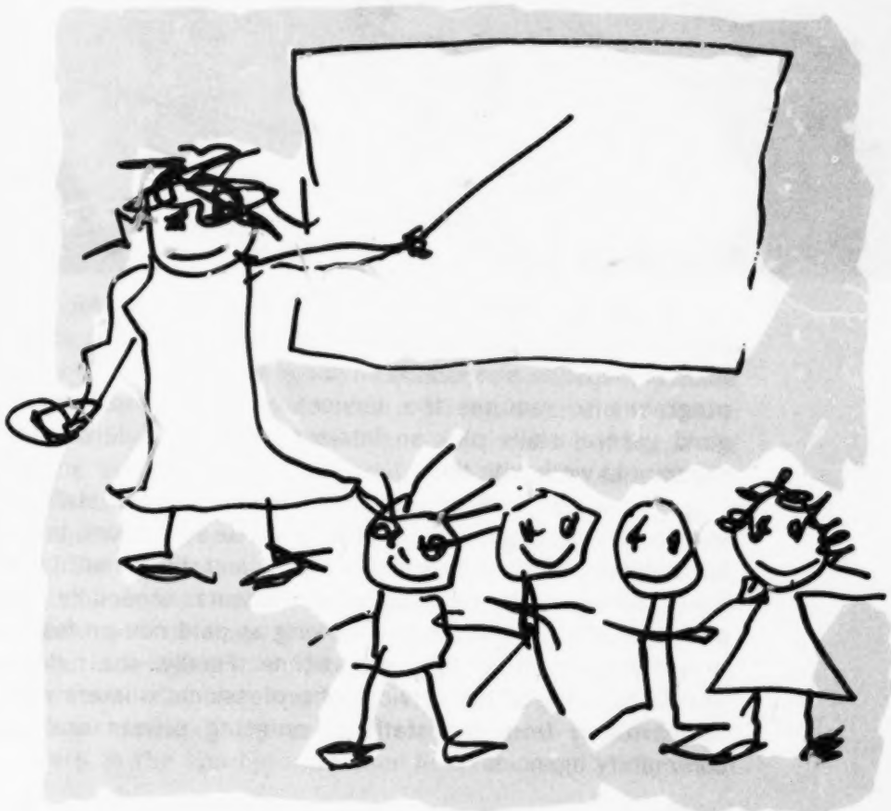
THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER

The Child Development Center is both a concept and a community facility. In concept it represents the drawing together of all those resources—family, community and professional—which can contribute to the child's total development. It draws heavily on the professional skills of persons in nutrition, health, education, psychology, social work, and recreation. It recognizes both paid and volunteer non-professionals can make important contributions. Finally the concept emphasizes the family is fundamental to the child's development. Parents should play an important role in developing policies, will work in the Centers and participate in the programs.

As a community facility the Child Development Center is organized around its classroom and outdoor play areas. Ideally it should also provide a program for health services, parent interviews and counseling, feeding of the children, and meetings of parents and other residents of the community. The space is arranged so as to permit working in small groups or individually with the children. Where some activities are performed at other locations, the staff should function as an integral part of the Center.



the staff for a child development center

A quality program in a Child Development Center requires the services of many people with professional skills: in education, in medicine and health, in social work, in nutrition. A good program also requires the services of many people who have good general skills plus an interest in young children and the capacity to work with them.

There are four ways of securing the needed staff. Some will be paid professional staff. Many will be volunteers, including both those with professional training and those with general skills. Some will be neighborhood residents, especially parents of the children in the Center, working as paid non-professionals or volunteers, either full or part-time. Finally, the fullest use should be made of the services of professional workers who can be borrowed from the staffs of on-going private and public community agencies.

THE TEACHER

There should be a teacher in charge of each group of 15 children. She will become the key adult in the daily lives of the young children in a Child Development Center. She, more than any other, will determine the quality of the experiences these children have.

Some say, "Anyone can teach young children," but nothing can be further from the truth. Of all the ages of children probably the most challenging are the pre-primary years. Teaching the youngest children is a highly skilled job. It demands people with special, human qualities and professional training to improve their skills.

Young children are active—they don't sit quietly while a teacher teaches.

Young children need firsthand experiences—they don't learn by sitting at a desk while someone talks at them.

Young children are very vulnerable. Their personalities are beginning to form, and they are starting to develop their basic attitudes toward life, discipline, people and learning itself. This vulnerability calls for a teacher who will be responsive to each individual child, while still keeping the needs of the group in mind.

Most important of all, Child Development Centers are for the small children of deprived families. These young children have special needs. Their time is short. They need understanding, sensitive guidance, skilled enrichment **now,** before they pay a needless price in school failure. These children perhaps even more than all other young children, need sensitive, qualified, and understanding teachers.

Professional Preparation

Ideally, teachers in Head Start Programs should be graduates of a four-year college program with a major in Nursery Education, Nursery-Kindergarten Education, or Early Childhood Education. Such a major includes a strong base in the liberal arts; the study of the basic growth and development of the young child; the study of all the curricula and learning experiences and materials and methods for teaching young children; and a practice period of supervised teaching. In some instances majors in Child Development also have this training, and it is possible that some people in related fields such as psychology, child welfare and medicine may also have the necessary background. Similarly, individuals with extensive experience in working with young children may have reached a very high level of professional competence despite the absence of formal degree qualifications.

Work in the appropriate major fields is usually offered in

colleges of education. Some colleges of home economics and some departments of child study, child development and psychology also offer this professional preparation.

The Human Qualities of the Teacher

Full training and complete legal certification do not guarantee a person's ability to work with young children. The personal qualities of the teacher are fully as important as her training, and it is vital to assess both a person's personality and character in choosing a teacher.

Probably the single most important attribute of a good teacher is **warmth.** A teacher needs an easy-going quality, a relaxed friendly manner, and a simple approachable style so that young children easily come to her. Most good teachers are not abrupt, cold, quick-tempered, aloof, high-and-mighty and "teacherish" with their youngsters. A sense of humor and a ready smile may be the best indicators of a teacher's capacity to give love and support to a young child.

A good teacher should also be well-organized and confident. Many activities go on at once in groups for young children. Quick decisions have to be made. New limits for behavior must be set on the spot. Transitions from one activity to another have to be planned ahead of time. The ready smile must come from a level head. A good teacher has to think quickly and well. It is well known that young children ask "the darnedest" questions. The program may look like "just play" but in a short span of time questions can come and teaching opportunities arise in chemistry, mathematics, biology, art, music, economics, history. The teacher can never be just a few pages ahead in the textbook—for there is no textbook. The teacher must be a well-informed person.

A good teacher has the same qualities she hopes to instill in the children. She must be curious, with an urge to explore and find out. She must be creative, not stuck in a rut or happy staying within safe structured lines. In particular, the young children of the poor need someone who can communicate well and easily, a person who speaks clearly and who chooses words wisely.

The smile, the level head, the smart head must be attached to an active body. Young children are busy children. They move fast. They are noisy children. Young children don't sit and look and listen—they touch and use. Teaching young children is a physically tiring occupation. It makes unusual psychological demands too. Young children ask a lot of their teacher—information, support, comfort, assistance—and they ask for everything continuously. Teaching young children is no job for anyone who wants peace and quiet. It is no job for anyone who tires easily.

Recruiting Qualified Teachers

There is a shortage of teachers with both the professional training or experience and the human qualities needed. In some communities, however, it may be possible to uncover an ample supply of fully qualified people.

Many nursery school teachers, kindergarten teachers, day care center teachers, cooperative nursery school teachers with good training are at home. They have left teaching to concentrate on their own families. Some of these women may now be available to come back to teaching.

Some with the needed training have gone into other work. They are not using their professional skills because good paying jobs with young children have not been available.

This past job shortage has caused others to secure work with older children. Their training was with young children, their hearts are with young children, but the jobs have not been available.

Still other people with appropriate training are now employed on a part-time basis, sometimes at sub-professional salaries. These people have stayed with their profession, despite low pay, because of their commitment to young children.

It is important to tap every source of possible names. Placement bureaus of colleges can usually provide lists of alumnae with the desired qualifications. Local branches of the major professional associations of teachers of young children—the Association for Childhood Education, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (formerly the National Association for Nursery Education), Parent Cooperative Preschools, International—can provide the names of past and present members. Private nursery schools, cooperative nursery schools, private kindergartens can give the names of former teachers. There is a great need for local newspaper, radio and TV publicity, stressing the job opportunities in Child Development Centers for professionally prepared teachers of young children. A shortage exists, but energetic recruitment efforts may reveal more qualified applicants than might be expected.

Helping to Train Teachers

One way a community can improve the quality of its staff is to make sure all teachers who need it, get help, supervision and training on the job. If teachers are not fully qualified, it is very important that there be skilled people in over-all leadership, not tied down with desk and administrative responsibilities, free to give those who are working directly with the children a helping hand.

Communities can insist that teachers read as much as possible about good programs for young children. They can make every effort to help these teachers visit and observe good groups for young children. They can bring to the community some of the excellent films that are available showing good group life for young children. Communities can arrange for consultation from experts from the nearest college which offers training. They can use their consultants and their own trained leadership for a continuing series of evening, Saturday and weekend institutes, seminars and training programs, centering on the problems teachers face as they work with their children. They will not let their teachers drift unaided.

The greatest help of all is to keep the class size as small as possible for less well qualified teachers. A class size of fifteen three or four or five-year-olds may seem small as one thinks of elementary or secondary school classes. But these are very young children in Child Development Centers and they are children of disadvantaged backgrounds. Fifteen is full class size for this age and for these particular children. It should be the maximum number, especially when the teacher is learning as she goes along.

Other Sources for Staff

All Child Development Centers must conform to local and state ordinances and regulations. Where the laws do not forbid it, and because of the shortage, some communities may have to choose teachers who have less than the ideal mixture of professional training experience and human qualities. When this is the decision, it is important to seek people whose background of experience and training most closely approximates that of the fully qualified teacher. It is especially important to seek those who have the fullest measure of the needed human attributes. An effort must be made to find those who are "naturals" with young children—a very difficult task requiring wise judgment if young children are to be served well.

Some primary teachers—first, second or third grade—are possibilities. Their leanings have moved them toward the youngest children in the regular school program. However, many primary programs are sitting, bookish, reading, paper-and-pencil programs, a far cry from what younger children need. The trick is to look for a primary teacher who would be happier in a freer, more active, more varied program, using more firsthand experiences.

Mature, creative, intuitive people whose college work has included some of the background of the qualified teacher are also possibilities. Graduates in home economics, in psychology, in sociology, for example, often have excellent grounding in child growth and development. They may need help in group leadership and in the skills of teaching and program planning.

Professional people from fields closely allied to the group-teaching of young children are other possibilities. Children's librarians have had a lot of experience with one aspect of the total program. Recreation workers and camp leaders who have had experience with pre-primary children may well know aspects of the total program and the general qualities of fluidity and freedom essential to a program for young children.

Some young people may be possibilities. A graduate of a two-year junior or community college who has majored in nursery school, kindergarten or early childhood education can sometimes be used. Such a graduate would normally be an assistant teacher, but outstanding individuals may have many of the qualities of a fully qualified teacher.

Occasionally one can find individuals with a minimum of college background who nevertheless have had excellent experience over long periods of time working with young children in groups. It is important to assess the quality of this experience —seventeen years of practicing the wrong approaches to children is no help. But seventeen years, or seven, in a good child care center or private nursery school or good program of religious education may be almost the equivalent of professional training.

When Good Teachers Are Not Available

If an energetic recruitment campaign does not uncover enough good teachers, a community faces a dilemma which has no easy solutions. The young children of the poor need help **now,** yet communities must take into account the fact that unqualified teachers may do more harm than good. One cannot assume that a child from an impoverished home is necessarily better off in an "impoverished" group.

Without skilled guidance, young children may become the focus of more "love" than they need. Many unqualified people have only a smothering love to give; they often do too much for young children, blocking the healthy development of children's independence.

Another hazard of unskilled guidance is that young children may face more imposed control than is good for them. Unqualified teachers often make young children wait too long, line up too much, keep quiet too long. Without training and good experience they do not have the skill needed to keep many activities going on at once. They sometimes put unhealthy pressures on children, using competition unwisely, using fears and threats and punishments insensitively. They often mix up the healthy behavior of young children, their energy and enthusiasm and normal possessiveness and constructive willfulness with misbehavior. Or young children with unqualified teachers may have too little discipline because the teacher does not know constructive ways of channeling their energies.

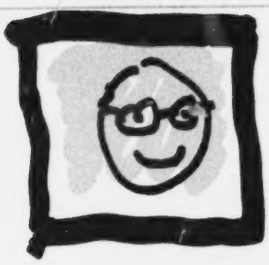
Unqualified teachers may give too little encouragement to children's curiosity, finding it easier to say "Don't touch" than to let children experiment. They may discourage creativity and imagination because they feel more comfortable when children paint or build or play more like adults than in their own childlike way. Unqualified teachers are more apt to miss many significant teaching opportunities, not recognizing the chances as children play to improve language, to build concepts, to extend information, to reinforce understandings.

In particular, unqualified teachers may do great damage to children who have already been hurt and who show their wounds through aggression or by such symptoms as thumb-sucking or great shyness. A teacher without training or good experience or understanding sympathy for children may find the symptoms of a child's distress hard to understand and to tolerate. Her angry response may only push the symptoms down deeper into the child.

The goals of a Child Development Center—the fullest social, emotional, physical and intellectual development of the child—can be missed, sometimes even hindered, because the

teacher in charge is not qualified. A child can start his regular schooling a weaker person, not stronger, because of his bad preschool experiences.

While there is no easy solution for the immediate present, communities can help their own cause for the future by directing interested college graduates to the increasing number of intensive teaching training programs being offered at colleges and state universities all over the country. Everyone can help, too, by spreading the word to young people—those graduating from high school and students now in college—that there are jobs now and in the future for people trained to teach young children.



ASSISTANT TEACHERS

Every group of fifteen preschool children should have at least one assistant teacher, as well as a teacher. If the Child Development Center program continues throughout the full day, two assistant teachers are needed because of the long hours.

Neighborhood residents, especially mothers of preschool children, can become excellent assistant teachers if they are carefully selected. Assistant teachers should have all of the human qualities that a teacher has, plus a willingness to learn and expand their horizons. They work directly with the young children and must have strengths to bring to these children.

The need for having at least two adults always on hand arises from several factors. At any one time one child may need the full attention of one adult. He may be hurt and need aid and sympathy. He may have to be taken to the bathroom. He may become ill or may be in tears because of a conflict or he may be frightened. In addition to this ever-present need for individual attention, in a Child Development Center many activities go on at once. Some children are painting, some are working with blocks, some may be at the work bench needing close supervision.

The teacher must be responsible for the total program, but she will undoubtedly want to work with other staff members in planning activities. She must feel in over-all charge of all activities. She will probably be the one who works with the total group at story time or other occasional times when everyone, or most of the children, are together. But an assistant—a steady, regular staff member who knows the children and who comes every day—is a necessity.

Using neighborhood residents, especially mothers, pays off in two ways. By working with children under the direction of a skilled teacher, these assistant teachers become more skilled with their own children and more knowledgeable about ways of enriching the life of their own children. There is no better course in child development than working directly with children under good guidance. But neighborhood residents will also bring many assets to their job—they will be giving as well as getting. They may know some of the children as individuals. They will often know the ways of the community better than the teacher. They may have a special feeling for the qualities and strengths and needs of the young children of the poor. They may be skilled in talking to the parents of the children in the group, interpreting to them the value of the experiences the children are having. Many assistant teachers may have special talents which can be highly useful in groups of young children: talents in singing or dancing or in rhythms; talents in working with wood; talents in

using art materials. Assistant teachers should be chosen both for how they can contribute to the group life and for how the group life experience can contribute to them and to their own children.

In all probability almost all teachers will be women. However, if men can be found who have the qualities to become good teachers or assistant teachers, they can make a special contribution. Almost all young children see too little of the males in their families. As children move on up into the elementary school their world tends to become heavily feminized, and male companionship can be a very constructive experience in a young child's life.

All teachers have a lot of "dirty work" to do. Fixing paints, cleaning up after children who have worked with clay, getting the sand back into the sand box, tidying up after spills, cleaning up when young children have wet or vomited—this is all part of the day's work of teaching young children. It is important for assistant teachers to know this "dirty" part of the job because the word "teacher" can call up images of nice, clean wordy-work. Assistant teachers must be prepared in advance to take it all in their stride, the pleasant and the not-so-nice.

They must know, too, that they always work under the direction and supervision of the teacher. They must be prepared to accept assignments, to take suggestions, to modify what they do in light of the more experienced background of the teacher. This can be an important understanding if the assistant teacher is a man and the more qualified teacher a woman, or if there is an age difference.

Problems may arise, too, if an assistant teacher works in a group which includes her own child. It can be very difficult for a young child to understand that "his" mother is also everyone's teacher. Sharing time, affection, attention, interest is never easy for young children. Whenever it is possible for a neighborhood resident to work in a Center but not in the group where her own child is, there will be less strain on the mother and the child.

Neighborhood residents or parents of the children being served are not the only source of assistant teachers. Many of those already mentioned as possible teachers, should there be an inadequate supply of fully qualified people, would make excellent assistant teachers. Junior college graduates, librarians and others experienced in working with young children may fill this position, either as volunteers or as paid workers. Parents who have had children in cooperative nursery schools are an especially good source. The assistant teacher, however, must be a regular day-after-day worker. The continuity of relationship with children, knowing the flow of the program, gradually building skill with materials are vital abilities in the person who will work as the partner to the head teacher.

It hardly needs stating that all those who work with young children, especially non-professional assistant teachers and volunteers, must be carefully screened to insure that they are persons of good character. Young children can attract those who have undesirable qualities. Every safeguard must be taken to protect children by the most careful choice of the staff who will work with them day after day.

OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

Once children come together in a group the guidance of the daily program rests in the hands of the teacher. Within a Child Development Center, however, the role of the teacher must extend beyond that of the normal kindergarten or nursery school. The teacher needs to be concerned about and working with the whole child **and** his family. In doing these things the teacher will be using skills and techniques usually associated with social work, health, parent education and nutrition. The teacher needs professional help to do these things, but the early steps are generally left to her initiative and follow through is often her responsibility.

A major goal of the Center is to help children do better once they enter regular school but this success is not dependent alone on sound early educational experiences. The child's physical well-being is a basic prerequisite for later school success, as well as for his full daily functioning now.

Child Development Center programs call for full medical and dental screening to identify youngsters with special needs. They call for follow-through so that youngsters get the treatment help they need. This screening and the follow-through services must encompass children's vision and hearing and speech and nutritional needs.

Guides have been developed so that much of this initial screening can be done by non-professional staff, either volunteers or paid neighborhood residents or by others. The full cooperation of professional people is needed, however, to supervise the non-professionals and to provide those services that cannot be carried out by the non-professional staff. One of the most important tasks for the administrator of a Child Development Center is to enlist the cooperation and interest of the local department of health, and of pediatricians, dentists, ophthalmologists and other specialists.

Typically, children receive some health care when they are infants from well-baby clinics and private doctors. The years between infancy and their start to regular school are often the years when children get no medical services or get them only in

the event of emergency. Yet these can be prize years for uncovering defects before they become too serious and for starting treatments that can mean all the difference between good functioning and painful costly suffering. The occasion of bringing children together in groups during these so often wasted years offers the special opportunity to turn these years into a time of constructive intervention.

Similarly problems in the emotional and social adjustment of children arise in these early years and typically are unnoticed and worsen as the years go along. It is important for the administrator of a Child Development Center to enlist the interest and cooperation of the psychological services available. The professional staffs of child guidance clinics, of family service agencies, of mental health associations, and of psychiatrists and clinical psychologists in private practice, can supervise the screening of young children for psychological problems and insure that youngsters and their families get whatever help they need.

Communities with limited local resources in physical and mental health should turn to their state departments of health, welfare and mental health, and to state medical and psychological associations to see what services can be made available.

Obviously the fullest use should be made of school nurses and other school health services. Needed financial aid can sometimes be secured from local service organizations. Money and other help is also usually available from local voluntary associations concerned with particular health needs.

Child Development Centers serving meals to young children will need nutritional guidance which may be available from the public schools, from health departments, or as a voluntary contribution from individuals with special training in meal planning.

WORK WITH PARENTS

An essential part of the Child Development Center program is work with the parents of the young children in group living. No group can take the place of a child's family. A good group supplements family life and strengthens and supports it. It is imperative that there be concern with, and staff to make the good experiences of the child's life in a group one integral part of good twenty-four hour year-round living.

The teacher and the assistant teachers play an important role in this process. Through informal conversations, through more formal conferences, through group meetings, home visits, guided observation and through many other techniques, the educational staff can do a great deal to help parents understand the needs of their young children and how these needs can be met.

But the opportunity created by the Child Development Center goes beyond this. Many families need help in knowing about community resources which are available to them and which they are not using. Some families face problems of finance, of housing, of health, of meal planning, of legal matters which go beyond the immediate question of their child's behavior and growth. The administrator of the Child Development Center must secure the cooperation and interest of the professional family and child welfare workers of the community, if these broader needs are to be met.

This is especially important in Child Development Centers serving the children of working mothers and youngsters from other families with pressing social and economic problems. In other Centers where family needs may not be so intense, supervision and consultation from the communities' welfare resources will be essential but much of the work directed at reinforcing family life can be carried out by volunteers, or by less well trained home-school coordinators working under supervision.

A good program for young children means mobilizing all the professional skills from health, education and welfare. It means enabling these professions to work as a team. It means pooling all the strengths that can contribute to the well-being and sturdy growth of youngsters and of the families from which they come and to which they will return.

VOLUNTEERS

Child Development Centers offer the opportunity to Americans––young and old, professionals and non-professionals—to contribute whatever they have to give to this significant battle in the war against poverty.

The role that volunteers can play is discussed in detail in the booklet, **Volunteers in the Child Development Center.** This over-riding generality holds true, however: Every one of the jobs to be done on behalf of the young children of the poor and their families can be done by volunteers. Teachers can be volunteers. Assistant teachers can be volunteers. Doctors, dentists, social workers, nurses, nutritionists, all can be volunteers.

Probably most of the volunteer services will come from those who have general skills, rather than highly specialized professional skills. But the generalist can make a major contribution, and every effort should be made by the administrator of the Child Development Center, by the education and health and welfare staffs to utilize all that people have to give. There is room in a Child Development Center for all the hands and eyes and legs and brains that can be brought into play. Everyone—individuals and groups, church groups, PTA's, labor unions, service organizations—has a stake in winning the war on poverty. No one should be shut out who wants and is able to contribute.

Volunteers, of course, must be carefully chosen for the specific abilities and services they have to bring. They must be chosen for the good they can do for children, not for the good children can do for them. They must be chosen so that their numbers are manageable and become an asset, not a hindrance to the program. Volunteers must understand their responsibilities. The fact that their services are offered free does not release volunteers from the obligation to fit into their appropriate place in a total program. Volunteers must be helped to understand that they are volunteering for a serious service, which may have a fixed schedule, which may make specific demands, which puts them under supervision, and which expects the same quality of effort, the same reliability, and the same cooperative functioning which is demanded of the paid staff.

The right mix of professional skills and of non-professional skills, of paid workers and of volunteers, of neighborhood residents and of those who bring their talents from outside the area being served can create a Child Development Center which is strong and which helps its children and their families to be strong.